THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) 37,223 villages in the country are connected by telephones as on 30-9-88.

(b) 42,465 villages are likely to be connected by the telephones by the end of Seventh Five Year Plan.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) At present the Department plans to provide telecom. facility on fully subsidised basis within about 5 kms. of every inhabited place. To achieve this target about 22,400 more identified villages need to be provided with Telecom facility. Abount 5,400 villages will be provided with telecom. facility during the remaining two years of the Seventh Plan. About 16,500 villages will be covered during the early part of the Eighth Plan and rest will be covered progressively.

Creation of National Power Grid

1354. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to create a National Power Grid; and

(b) if so, by when the National Power Grid will be created and start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) and (b) The continued augmentation of Extra High Voltage lines in the Central Sector and creation/strengthening of Inte-State and Inter-Regional transmission links, and the load despatch facilities, have provided impetus for creation of a National Power Grid. The possibility of ultimately having to create a separate organisation at the National level to design, construct, maintain and operate the Extra High Voltage lines for transmission of Power from one State/Region to another, cannot be ruled out. The matter, however, requiries an in-depth study of all aspects of the problem, including set up of the proposed organisation and is receiving urgent attention of Government.

Shifting of telephones of Journalist Members

1355. SHRI NARESH C. PUGLIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, Delhi has received any representation from the Samachar Cooperative Group Housing, Society, Mayur Vihar Extension, Phase-II for providing facilities to shift telephones of Journalist Members;

(b) if so, what action has so far been taken by Government thereon and by when Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited will complete this work; and

(c) whether Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited has reduced the prices of newly introduced push button telephones, if so, what are the reasons therefor

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A cable network meeting demand from different subscribers in this area has already been planned and the work has been taken up. Telephone connections are likely to be provided progressively during 1989-90.

(c) The one time charge leviable for provision of push buton telephones has been reduced from Rs. 500 to Rs. 100 w.e.f. 1-10-88 by the Dep-

artment of Telecom. and the same is applicable for the entire country including Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited. This has been effected due to increased production and availability of the same at cheaper rates.

Developing Wind Power Sector

1356. SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to an article by M/s. Neelam-Mathews in "Windpower Monthly" from Denmark (October-1988) which makes out a strong case for support to their neglected non-conventional power sector; and

(b) whether Government would ensure that wind energy sector receives maximum attention in view of its great possibilities?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Department of Non-conventional Energy Sources has already taken steps to harness the potential for wind power generation in the country. Wind power projects of aggregate capacity 7.5 MW have been set up, and 14.2 million units of electricity have already been fed to the respective State grids. Another 5.0 MW capacity is under installation. Further projects of aggregate capacity 22.5 MW have been taken up for implementation. As the potential is large it is possible to achieve much higher capacity if sufficient funds are made available.

Gujarat Government's proposal for Power Generation in Private Sector

1357. SHRI RAMSINH RATHVA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering the suggestion to allow private sector companies to enter the field of power generation and/or transmission;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Goverment of Gujarat proposes to float a joint company with Reliance Industries Limited or their subsidiary power generation, if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government have received any request from Government of Gujarat to clear such proposal, if so, what are the details thereof and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) and (b) The policy with regard to the generation and distribution of electricity continues to be regulated by the Industrial Policy Resolution, 1956. The expansion of the existing privately owned utilities or the establishment of new units in the private sector is not precluded under the Resolution. The modalities for encouraging private sector participation in power generation are receiving the considerations of Government.

(c) and (d) No proposal has so far been received from the Government of Gujarat to float a joint company with M/s. Reliance Industries Limited or their subsidiary for power generation.

विद्युत उत्पादन की लागत

1358. सरदार जगजीत सिंह अरोड़ा : क्या ऊर्जा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि विद्युत उत्पादन की लागत में क्रमशः वृद्धि होने के संकेत मिल रहे हैं;